

## **Various COVID-19 related news briefs for April 2, 2020**

### **Ministry asks hospitals to stop admitting patients from abroad**

The state of Baden-Württemberg supported the neighbouring Elsass, which is badly affected by the coronavirus. Patients from the region were accommodated in hospitals in the southwest. This has now come to an end.

**Stuttgart** - For the time being, hospitals in Baden-Württemberg will not accept any more patients from abroad. In a letter from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the clinics, which has been submitted to the German Press Agency, it states: "Due to the dynamic development of the situation in Baden-Württemberg, we ask you to refrain from further admissions from abroad at this time. The current assessment of the situation does not currently permit any further admissions from abroad. Should the situation in our country improve, we will contact you again. The letter is dated 24 March. This was first reported in the "Badische Neueste Nachrichten" News of Thursday.

Baden-Württemberg had shortly before agreed to admit 23 seriously ill corona patients from France to hospitals. In return, the Ministry of Health had asked the hospitals in the southwest to report free ventilator beds. However, the hospitals should not be in distress of capacity, when taking care of the patients. The southwest currently has enough ventilation beds, approximately 2300. Southern Elsass, which borders Baden-Wuerttemberg, is particularly hard hit by the corona pandemic. According to the local authorities, the intensive care units of the hospitals are completely occupied.

Prime Minister Winfried Kretschmann (Greens) said on Wednesday in a statement broadcasted on the Internet, that there is currently no reason to relief the restricted measurements. He said it doesn't make sense to discuss an end to the measures now. "The situation remains serious." In the next few days, many people who are seriously ill are expected to arrive at local hospitals. (Source: *Stuttgarter Zeitung* April 1, 2020)

### **Mostly middle-aged adults affected - men more often than women**

The number of new infections in Stuttgart with the novel coronavirus is increasing daily. People of all age groups have become infected; the disease is currently most common in middle-aged people and slightly more men than women are infected with coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. This is shown by an analysis of the health office on Wednesday, April 1.

According to the results, a total of 799 infections were registered in Stuttgart at the time of the evaluation: 54 per cent of these were men and 46 per cent women. Six men and one woman died; they were all over 63 years old and suffered from pre-existing conditions.

Head of Office Professor Stefan Eehalt explained: "This interim balance is revealing, it also reflects the federal trend. One can see that it is not a 'senior citizens virus', as can be read in various media reports. It is noticeable that more than a third of all infected persons are between 26 and 40 years old. He sees reasons for this in the high mobility of these people, their leisure time behaviour and numerous social contacts, among other things. "In terms of numbers, this is the largest group for a disease, which therefore also transmits the virus most frequently. Although young ones are perhaps more carefree, I make it clear that no one is invulnerable. The risk that the infection takes a severe course increases with age and when people have to deal with diseases such as those of the heart, lungs or liver. "This is why we also speak of vulnerable groups. Our main focus is on protecting these people. For this reason, we have taken comprehensive measures, such as a ban on visiting old people's homes and nursing homes."

Prof. Eehalt continued: "The situation is still serious and dynamic. The Robert Koch Institute assesses the risk of infection as high. Unfortunately, we are still seeing a growth in new infections in Stuttgart. It can be seen that the measures taken, in particular the drastic reduction of contact, are limiting growth. That is why it is so important to comply with the state's regulations as well as the distance and hygiene rules. Only in this way can we ensure a functioning health system for all."

Mr. Eehalt urgently warned: "The virus doesn't stop in front of anyone. Younger people can also suffer severe consequences of this disease, become dependent on artificial respiration or die from the virus. Everyone can and must do something to break this pandemic. Social solidarity is extremely important now. That is why we have deliberately chosen the motto: 'Stuttgart stands on its distance - and stands together'". (Source: *Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart, April 1, 2020*)

### **Authorities warn against fraudulent activities**

In various cities, fraudsters have recently tried to profit from the fear of the coronavirus nationwide. The state capital Stuttgart warned of this on Thursday, April 2. The criminals partly rely on perfidious methods. For example, they pretend to be public officials or pretend to be close relatives.

Dr. Martin Schairer, Mayor for Security, Public Order and Sport, said: "We have received reports from several cities, that criminals are trying to use the virus for their scams. They want to shamelessly exploit the insecurity of the people to their benefit." According to Schairer, the best protection against fraudsters is a healthy portion of distrust.

Sometimes the perpetrators ring the doorbell at the front door and pose as doctors or employees of the health department or public order office who want to carry out corona

tests. In fact, neither the Health Department nor the Office of Public Order perform unannounced corona tests in private homes. The City of Stuttgart advises the following:

- Hang up if you are asked by telephone to take tests that are subject to a charge
- Contact your general practitioner or the health authorities and ask, whether a test has been ordered for you
- Take a close look at visitors, through your window, before opening the door
- If you are unexpectedly visited by alleged authority representatives, always have them show you an ID
- If you have any doubts, call authorities to find out whether an employee has been seconded to you from them
- Do not hand over money to alleged “testers” at your front door
- Don't let strangers into your home

These fraudsters look up their victims in phonebooks and look for what they consider “older” Names, to filter especially elderly victims and pretend to be grandchildren and describe their supposed plight. This is what the city advises:

- Never hand over money or valuables things like jewelry to strangers
- Do not let yourself be pressured
- Always consult with your relatives

The general rule to follow is: If you have any doubt, call the police on 110 and also inform relatives, friends and neighbors about this new type of scam. (Source: *Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart April 2, 2020*)

### **City calls on people shopping at Hardware and garden supply centers to urgently comply with Corona protection measures.**

During inspections, the Stuttgart police found that implemented measures were not followed at certain DIY stores. Fines up to Euro 25,000 and the imposition of more far-reaching regulations, including the closure of all DIY superstores and garden centers if rules are not followed.

These rules are in particular: avoiding queues and having at least 1.5 – 2 meters distance between customers, using the cart as an option to keep the distance. (*City of Stuttgart: Press Release*)